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Your Wednesday Briefing

By CHRIS STANFORD

Natro Aryadi was one of only a handful of survivors after an earthquake on the Indonesian island of Lombok on Sunday. Trapped in the rubble of a mosque, he dug his way out using a chunk of debris, taking more than 12 hours to move less than 20 yards. Rick Paddock/The New York Times

Good morning.

Here's what you need to know:

A slim G.O.P. lead in a once-safe district

• The good news, if you're a Republican: Troy Balderson is narrowly ahead in a special election to fill a House seat in a district outside Columbus, Ohio.

The bad news: It's a district that President Trump won handily in 2016 and that routinely elected Republicans before that.

Troy Balderson spoke in Newark, Ohio, on Tuesday night. He had been endorsed by President Trump.

Andrew Spear for The New York Times

With provisional ballots yet to be counted, it could be days or weeks before there's a final result in the election, one of many on Tuesday. Here are five takeaways and full results from five states.

• **Among the highlights**: A Republican primary for governor is deadlocked in Kansas; Republican candidates endorsed by Mr. Trump won in Michigan; and voters in Missouri rejected a proposal to curb union power.

At Manafort trial, nobody looks good

• The testimony on Tuesday during the fraud trial of Paul Manafort sullied both his reputation and that of Rick Gates, his former aide who is now the prosecution's star witness. Mr. Gates, under cross-examination, was portrayed as a thief, adulterer and liar.

Our reporters write: "The testimony filled in a picture of two men with few scruples and a powerful thirst for money, hiding payments from Ukrainian clients in foreign bank accounts and deceiving accountants, banks and tax authorities, both individually and together."

The trial is the first by the office of the special counsel, Robert Mueller, who is investigating Russia's election interference and possible coordination by the Trump campaign.

• **Kristin Davis**, who once had an escort service and ran for New York governor, is set to testify this week before a grand jury. We looked at her possible connection to the Russia investigation.

A record fire, and 16 more

• Nearly 600,000 acres burned. More than 13,000 firefighters at work. More than 2,300 members of the National Guard called in.

The numbers, however, don't fully tell the story of the complexity of the firefighting effort in California, where nearly three times as many acres have been scorched as in the same period last year.

• **"It's unprecedented** to have so many sustained demands for so many resources over such a short amount of time," one official said.

War without end

• The conflict in Afghanistan has endured without a clear exit strategy for almost 17 years, across three U.S. presidencies.

There is also the war in Iraq, which started in 2003 and continues in a different form over the Syrian border.

More than three million Americans have served in uniform in these wars, and nearly 7,000 of them have died.

• **The Times Magazine** takes a long look this week at how the failure of American military campaigns has left a generation of soldiers with little to fight for but one another.

"The Daily": Paul Ryan's exit interview

• As speaker of the House, he should be at the peak of his power. But he's walking away.

Listen on a computer, an iOS device or an Android device.

Business

• **President Trump** says that tariffs on steel, aluminum and imported Chinese goods will generate enough revenue to reduce the federal debt. The math isn't on his side.

• **Ikea**, the world's largest furniture retailer, has opened its first outlet in India. The store in Hyderabad has the classic layout, but what's on display is somewhat different.

• **Elon Musk**, the chief executive of Tesla, suggested that he might take the automaker private, sending its stock soaring.

• **Has social media hit a ceiling**? Snap, the maker of Snapchat, lost three million daily active users in the latest quarter, and it's not alone.

• **Alex Jones**, the right-wing conspiracy theorist, urged his followers to fight back (and buy merchandise) after his programming was removed from several social media platforms.

Mr. Jones and his supporters have complained that he has been deprived of his First Amendment rights. Free-speech scholars disagree.

• **U.S. stocks** were up on Tuesday. Here's a snapshot of global markets today.

Smarter Living

Tips for a more fulfilling life.

• **Today we introduce Ask,** a way for Times subscribers to relay questions to our journalists and family of experts. (Everybody, including nonsubscribers, can benefit from the answers.) For the next month, we're focusing on fitness.

Our first expert is Jessamyn Stanley, a yoga teacher, body positivity advocate and author of "Every Body Yoga." Have a question about the right kind of class, a pose for a certain ache or gear? Ask here.

Celeste Sloman for The New York Times

• **Recipe of the day:** If you're feeling ambitious on a weeknight, make buttermilk fried chicken.

Noteworthy

• A dream ends on a mountain road

"I've grown tired of spending the best hours of my day in front of a glowing rectangle," Jay Austin wrote last year. So he and his partner, Lauren Geoghegan, quit their jobs and set off to cycle the globe.

The young American couple had a vision of the world. The men who mowed them down in Tajikistan had a starkly different one. Our correspondent tells their tragic but inspiring story.

Lauren Geoghegan and Jay Austin met in Washington and were cycling around the world.

Simplycycling.org

• Southern food, or soul food?

Two Atlanta cooks, Todd Richards and Virginia Willis, have published cookbooks this year that reflect new ways of thinking about Southern food. One of our writers talked to them about culture, identity and cuisine.

Here's more from this week's Food section.

• A long wait for a cast like this

The last time a major Hollywood film set in the present featured a predominantly Asian cast was 1993, with “The Joy Luck Club.”

“Crazy Rich Asians,” which is based on a best-selling novel, opens next week after an arduous casting process.

• Best of late-night TV

Trevor Noah relished the testimony of Rick Gates at the trial of his former boss, Paul Manafort: “He’s confessing to stealing from the same guy that he was committing crimes with. Like, Manafort must have been so mad — but also at the same time, so proud.”

• Quotation of the day

“Pound for pound, Stan Mikita was one of the greatest players of all time.”

— Bobby Hull, the Hall of Fame hockey star, describing his teammate, who was 5-foot-8 and 150 pounds when he joined the Chicago Blackhawks in 1958. Mr. Mikita died on Tuesday at 78.

• The Times, in other words

Here’s an image of today’s front page, and links to our Opinion content and crossword puzzles.

• What we’re reading

Kate Phillips, a senior editor for health and science, recommends this article from STAT: “A pair of medical detectives searching for people with ALS and specific genetic mutations built a 250-page digital family tree, with about 6,700 names, eight generations, two intertwined families. This fascinating story follows the researchers’ forays into a region with a peculiar hold on the disease: the Cumberland Gap.”

Back Story

New York’s Restaurant Week, a promotional event offering dining deals across the city, is underway, so today we’re exploring the history of restaurants.

Dining venues have existed since antiquity. Greeks and Romans ate at thermopolia, where customers could grab drinks and food from divots in L-shaped counters.

A restaurant in Paris, where modern restaurants got their start in the 1700s.

A restaurant in Paris, where modern restaurants got their start in the 1700s.

Dmitry Kostyukov for The New York Times

In 13th-century China, eateries featured regional specialties and à la carte menus, and some consider them to be the predecessors of today's restaurants.

Globally, taverns and inns served food, but they focused primarily on alcohol or lodging.

The word "restaurant" comes from 18th-century Paris, derived from the French verb

restaurer, meaning to restore. According to the encyclopedia Larousse Gastronomique, a man named Boulanger opened an establishment near the Louvre in 1765 that served “bouillons restaurants,” or restorative broths.

After the French Revolution, many chefs for well-to-do families lost their jobs and began emulating Boulanger’s business.

Although his story is widely cited, the origin of the modern restaurant is not so clear.

Rebecca Spang, a historian who has written about restaurants, said in an interview in 2000 that “there are simply no direct sources to demonstrate that someone called Boulanger existed and that he opened a restaurant.”

Instead, she suggests the distinction should go to Mathurin Roze de Chantoiseau, who opened a bouillon establishment in 1766 and called himself “the first restaurateur.”

Matthew Sedacca wrote today’s Back Story.

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